by DTS. Access to internet on local call basis from the nearest internet node has been provided throughout the country except in Andaman and Nicobar Island and Leh (J & K). The existing departmental Public Call Operators (PCO) and Subscriber Trunk Dialing (STD) booths are proposed to be upgraded to public tele-info/cyber centres. These centres will provide multi-utility services such as internet, e-mail access and internet libraries.

Signing of MOUs to Promote Information Technology

2982. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has signed Menorandum of Understanding (MOU) with some countries with a view to promote information technology;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : (a) yes, sir.

(b) and (c): The Ministery of Information Technology, Government of India have, so far, signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with Ezypt, Bulgaria, Ireland, Hong Kong and Singapore for bilateral co-operation in various areas of Information Technology and Electronics. These MOUs are expected to boost bilateral cooperation as well as bilateral trade in the areas of internet.

Setting up of HIT in Rajasthan

2983. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMAD KHAN PURRU): Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has established the first Indian Institute of Information Technology (IHT) at Allahabad on the Unes of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT);

(b) whether it is also a fact that the second similar HIT has recently being opened at Gwalior at Madhya Pradesh;

(c) whether it is a fact that Rajasthan has sent a request long back for opening such an Institutes in Rajasthan offering land free of cost alongwith other facilities;

(d) whether Government intends to open such an Institutes in Rajasthan and by when; and

(e) what has been Government's policy in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : (a) Government has recently established HIT at Allahabad as a Central Institute.

(b) Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management (IIITM) has been established at Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh with a focus on Management and Information Technology.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) The Institutes at Allahabad and Gwalior have to first consolidate and become more effective so that students from all over the country including Rajasthan could take advantage of the facilities that exist there.

There is, as such, no proposal at present to set up such an Institute in Rajasthan.

Denial of permission to attend IT conference

2984. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have denied permission to some Chief Ministers and Ministers of certain States for visiting US to attend the IT conference convened by Microsoft of Mr. Bill Gates; and

(b) if so, the details of the request and the reasons for the denial ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : (a) and (b) Microsoft had extended invitations to the State Governments to attend the Government Leaders' Conference at Seattle in USA from 2nd to 4th April, 2000. References in this regard were received by the Ministry of Information Technology, Government of India from Chief Ministers of Gujarat and Maharashtra and Ministers from Kerala and Madhya Pradesh. The Department of Personnel and Training, however, did not concur to the proposal and the Ministry of Information Technology had brought this fact to the notice of the concerned State Governments while simultaneously conveying its No Objection from technical angle.